

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION**

**GREAT LAKES REGION  
DETROIT AIRPORTS DISTRICT OFFICE  
ROMULUS, MICHIGAN**

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

**for**

**BUILDING DEMOLITIONS**

**at**

**MARQUETTE SAWYER REGIONAL AIRPORT  
GWINN, MICHIGAN**



**September 2023**

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) prepared this Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the demolition of 14 vacant buildings at the Marquette Sawyer Regional Airport (Sponsor).

In accordance with FAA Order 1050.1F, *Environmental Impacts: Policies and Procedures*; FAA Order 5050.4B, *NEPA Implementing Instructions for Airport Actions*, and based on the evaluation of the Final Environmental Assessment (Final EA), there are no significant impacts associated with the Sponsor's Proposed Project. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will not be prepared and a FONSI is being issued. This FONSI provides a review of the Sponsor's Proposed Project and the basis of the FAA's finding. Expected environmental consequences of the Proposed Project and mitigation commitments are defined and described further in the Final EA.

## **II. AIRPORT SPONSOR'S PROPOSED PROJECT & FEDERAL ACTION**

The Sponsor's Proposed Project is the demolition of the previous administrative, maintenance, logistics, and emergency services buildings; backfilling the foundations; and grading the footprint of each building.

The FAA analyzed the project's nexus to Section 163 of the 2018 FAA Reauthorization Act. For FAA's NEPA review. The Sponsor's Proposed Project requires the following Federal Actions from the FAA, which is subject to NEPA review:

- Unconditional approval of portions of the Airport Layout Plan (ALP) depicting those portions of the Sponsor's Proposed Project subject to FAA review and approval pursuant to 47107(a)(16)(B).
- Determinations under 49 U.S.C. §§ 47106 and 47107 regarding eligibility of the Sponsor's Proposed Project to receive Federal funding under the Airport Improvement Program (AIP).

## **III. PURPOSE & NEED**

The purpose and need of the Sponsor's Proposed Project are to enhance safety and utility of the Airport for current and future users. The 14 vacant buildings are in close proximity to the Airport's aprons and taxiways and pose a risk to aircraft due to potential impacts from hazardous materials and foreign object debris (FOD).

## **IV. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED**

In accordance with FAA Order 1050.1F, the Final EA (Chapter 2) identified and evaluated all reasonable alternatives to the Proposed Project. The following Final EA alternatives were reviewed for the demolition of the 14 buildings.

### **No Action Alternative**

The No Action Alternative assumes that no action would be taken to demolish the 14 buildings. Under this alternative, the Airport would remain in its current state with no plans to renovate the buildings for prospective tenants or remove the buildings and prepare the sites for redevelopment. The buildings and support infrastructure would remain in their current locations and continue to deteriorate in condition. For safety reasons, some ongoing maintenance and repairs would potentially take place, but no attempt would be made to meaningfully improve any facilities or infrastructure. The No Action Alternative does

not meet the Sponsor's purpose and need for the project; however, it has been included in the analysis per NEPA and FAA Order 1050.1.F. The No Action Alternative would be carried forward as a baseline alternative for environmental consequences to be compared to the preferred alternative.

#### Alternative 1 – Renovation of Existing Buildings

This alternative would renovate the 14 buildings proposed for demolition and convert them into new facilities for prospective tenants to lease. The renovations would involve gutting the buildings, reworking plumbing and electrical wiring, and replacing the necessary infrastructure. Due to Alternative 1 not meeting the project's purpose and need, it was dismissed from further consideration.

#### Alternative 2 – Airport Sponsor's Proposed Project (Preferred Alternative)

This alternative would demolish the 14 buildings proposed for demolition, followed by backfilling the foundations and grading the footprint of each building. Chapters 1 and 2 provide maps of the building locations.

### **V. PUBLIC REVIEW & COMMENT**

Public involvement and agency coordination was conducted by The Sponsor at the beginning of the EA process.

The Notice of Availability (NOA) of the Draft EA and opportunity for a Public Hearing was published in the local newspaper. Public comments were accepted from August 19, 2023, through September 19, 2023. Physical copies of the Draft EA were available for public review at the Marquette Sawyer Regional Airport during normal business hours as well as an electronic copy available on the Airport's website.

A public hearing was not requested, and no comments were received from the public. Agency comment letters can be found in Appendix A of the Final EA.

### **VI. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES & MITIGATION**

The Final EA (Chapter 3) describes the environmental consequences of the Sponsor's Proposed Project and proposed avoidance and mitigation measures. The Sponsor shall implement the following mitigation measures as a condition of environmental approval of the Proposed Project listed in this FONSI.

#### **1. Department of Transportation Act, Section 4(f)**

The Airport is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) as a Historic District under Criterion A in the areas of Military and Politics/Government. Its eligibility is related to Cold War era military efforts. All 14 buildings proposed for demolition were determined to be contributing resources to the K.I. Sawyer Air Force Base Historic District based on coordination with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). SHPO determined the proposed project will have an adverse effect on the Historic District. Given that Section 4(f) resources include historic properties, a Section 4(f) Evaluation was completed as part of this EA (Appendix H).

#### Mitigation

To mitigate Section 4(f) impacts, a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the FAA, SHPO, and the Michigan Strategic Fund was executed (Appendix E Historic Resources). It stipulates that the FAA will ensure the following measures are carried out in order to mitigate for the demolition of the 14 contributing buildings. Mitigation measures include:

- Historic property survey and Historic Property Management Plan
- Public interpretation to highlight the history and significance of K.I. Sawyer Air Force Base
- Archival photographic documentation and report

## **2. Hazardous Materials, Solid Waste, and Pollution Prevention**

The Sponsor retained a qualified environmental consulting firm to perform two types of environmental investigations for each of the 14 buildings proposed for. Investigations included a Hazardous Materials Assessment (HMA) and a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (Phase I ESA). The HMA is structured such that information that applies to all subject buildings is included in the body of the report. Specific information relevant to individual buildings is presented in Appendix A of the HMA report. In the case of the Phase I ESAs, the consultant prepared a separate report for each of the 14 buildings.

Due to the page size of the combined HMA and Phase I ESA reports (over 10,000 pages), an abridged version of the documents was created that only included the findings, conclusions, and recommended mitigation, while excluding items such as historical documents, laboratory results, miscellaneous supporting data, and chain-of-command forms. The abridged version of the reports and an executive summary are found in Appendix D Abridged Hazardous Materials. The full reports are available from the Airport upon request.

### **Mitigation**

Based on the information from the HMA and individual Phase I ESAs, hazardous material impacts are expected from implementation of the Preferred Alternative. The Sponsor will follow the mitigation requirements outlined in the HMA for all subject buildings, and the recommended mitigation from the Phase I ESAs for each building as described in Appendix D Abridged Hazardous Materials.

There would be no hazardous materials impacts from implementation of the No Action Alternative.

## **3. Historical, Architectural, Archeological, and Cultural Resources**

According to the Michigan SHPO, no previously recorded archeological sites or investigations overlap the archeology APE. Therefore, the proposed project will not affect previously recorded archeological sites. The archeology APE is in areas where soils were previously disturbed during the construction of the streets and buildings associated with the K.I. Sawyer Air Force Base. Therefore, the Section 106 report concluded the proposed project activities are unlikely to encounter undisturbed soils or significant archeological deposits.

The Section 106 report recommended that the K.I. Sawyer Air Force Base is, however, eligible for listing in the NRHP. It is eligible under Criterion A in the areas of Military and Politics/Government. Its eligibility is due to its associations with Cold War era military efforts and the expansion of the United States Air Force into northern Michigan. The eligibility is also a result of its associations with changing political policies during the Cold War that increasingly focused on air defense and detection during the Cold War. All 14 buildings proposed for demolition were recommended as contributing resources to the historic nature of K.I. Sawyer Air Force Base.

### **Mitigation**

The Section 106 Case Study identified the following measures to mitigate impacts to the K.I. Sawyer Air Force Base Historic District, which served as the basis for the MOA:

- Historic property survey and Historic Property Management Plan
- Public interpretation
- Archival photographic documentation and report

It is concluded that the Preferred Alternative will have an adverse effect on the K.I. Sawyer Air Force Base Historic District due to the proposed demolition of the 14 buildings. The impacts will be mitigated through the measures outlined in the MOA.

Impacts to the historic district may also result from the implementation of the No Action Alternative. The No Action Alternative assumes that no action would be taken to demolish the 14 buildings. Under this alternative, the Airport would remain in its current state and the buildings would continue to decline in condition thus affecting the historic integrity of the buildings.

## VII. FAA FINDING

After careful and thorough consideration of the facts contained in the Final EA, the undersigned finds the proposed Federal Actions are consistent with existing national environmental policies and objectives as set forth in Section 101(a) of NEPA and other applicable environmental requirements and will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment or include any condition requiring any consultation pursuant to section 102(2)(C) of NEPA. As a result, the FAA will not prepare an EIS for these Federal Actions.

Having met all relevant requirements for environmental considerations and consultations, the proposed Federal Actions are authorized to be taken at such time as other requirements are met.

These decisions are taken pursuant to 49 U.S.C. § 40101, et seq. The FAA finding regarding the proposed airport improvements and funding for the Marquette Sawyer Regional Airport, constitute an order of the Administrator, which is subject to review by the Court of Appeals of the United States, in accordance with the provisions of Section 1006 of Federal Aviation Act of 1958, as amended, 49 U.S.C. § 46110.

APPROVED:     X    

DISAPPROVED:                     

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John L. Mayfield Jr., Manager  
Detroit Airports District Office  
Federal Aviation Administration

    September 27, 2023      
Date